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SERIOUS REFLECTIONS ON THE UNCERTAINTY OF LIFE.

Man is a being made superior to all other terrestrial beings, possessing a mind which leads to the most profound speculation, and deep reflection. His eye can look no where but it sees the handy works of an Almighty power, first, in creating, then in sustaining the creation. He beholds all nature fitted for a useful purpose, and all things in the most complete harmony. Here his mind should take a deep range in inquiring, why these things were made, why they exist so long, and to what end they all are tending. Where, O Sun, didst thou receive that brilliant light that lightens the benighted globe? how long wilt thou continue to pour forth thy effulgent beams upon the inhabitants of the earth? when will the time come, when thy light shall cease to shine, and all thy attendant train be no more? What are those luminous specks that are just discernable to the naked eye in the far distant regions of space? O! ye Heavens! how mysterious is the ultimate design of your creation! Long before yon Sun shed his beams of light, or the illustrious train commenced their regular course in the sky, the residence of Angels was in existence—yea, an eternity before. In a certain period of never ending eternity, man was made to prove his faith for a few days on earth, and then join that heavenly band where existence has no end.

The stay of man on earth is short—his eternal happiness or everlasting misery depends on the manner of spending this short time. A few days of self-denial, and resistance from the enticing allurements of sin, and then everlasting life ; or the same time spent in dissipation, mirth, in all the gratifications of the flesh and the foolish pleasures of vanity, and then a dreary night of endless wo. If the young mind does not yield to this reflection, but merely exists for the gratification of nature's call, then hope is lost, the sure consequence is wo ! If he submits to profanity, or yield to dissipation, he is just so far in the road to ruin. The enlightened mind has no excuse for acting thus, therefore it is a mark of great wickedness, or a want of timely reflection. Strange ! that man should see his stay on earth so short, and yet we build a heaven here ! Strange, that he should know that sin is the gate to endless death, and still should venture on. Dreadful ! to behold him purchasing death in pleasures fatal way. A natural inquiry here arises, why does man thus proceed. The only reason that I can assign for man's forsaking morality, hardening his heart, and slighting all things sacred ; is mostly from the gratification of carnal lust. Here youth harden their hearts to escape the pangs of conscience, dive into dissipation, and bid a farewell to morality. When conscience warns them of their latter end, and of their sinful course, they reflect a moment, see they have to forsake this their greatest pleasure, now almost coequal with nature. In this situation they are unhappy, they feel awful apprehensions of a hereafter ; but finally, rather than be bereft of their greatest pleasure, they disperse all their serious thoughts, and cleave to their beloved object more closely. If they pass this point, their reformation is ever doubtful, their endless ruin more than probable. Of all things the continuance of life is most uncertain. The sun that is now above the horizon, we know not that we shall see him set—the sentence we now commence we know not, but before we end it, we shall be no more ! Yes, we must die—that tongue will cease to speak ; those eyes that are so

sprightly, and that body that is now quickened by the union of the soul, will soon be cold and in death—"the dreary regions of the dead, where all things are forgotten." Those gay festive scenes and happy days will soon be gone and return no more.

But shall we shut ourselves up from all pleasure, and go with a gloomy countenance all our days, because we know these things must be? No: Religion never was intended to make our pleasures less; we should go with a cheerful countenance, enjoy the pleasures of society, and make our company as agreeable as possible, if we can do so without engaging in evil; we may be cheerful and yet not sinful; man may enjoy the company of his fellow men, and yet not launch into error. Morality should be cultivated by every person, especially youth; he should engage in nothing without first reflecting; is there any evil there? His actions should be natural, not strained, but easy; he should be polite without any vain disgusting airs; neither proud, nor haughty. He should possess confidence in himself, but with necessary modesty: his conversation should be suited to the company he is in, with proper restrictions. It was the saying of a wise man, tell me what company you keep, and I will tell you who you are. In short, he should possess the guide of reflection in all his undertakings.

SPECTRE OF THE BROKEN.

This is one of those curious and interesting atmospheric phenomena, or deceptions, which proceed from one common cause, an irregularity in the tenuity of the atmospheric fluid. This fluid is commonly of an homogeneous, or equal tenuity, and consequently suffers the rays of the sun to penetrate it without any obstruction or change; but is at times irregular, and composed of parts of bodies of a denser medium than its general texture and constitution. Under these circumstances, the fluent ray, if it did not enter the denser medium in a direct or perpendicular line will be either reflected, or refracted, or both; and the object surveyed through it, will assume a new, and, not unfrequently, a grotesque or highly magnified appearance.

The SPECTRE OF THE BROKEN is an ærial figure which is sometimes seen among the Hartz mountains in Hanover. This phenomenon has been witnessed by various travellers, and among them, by M. Haue, from whose relation the following particulars are extracted. "Having ascended the Broken (mountain) for the thirtieth time I was at length so fortunate as to have the pleasure of seeing this phenomenon. The sun rose about four o'clock, and the atmosphere being quite serene towards the east, its rays could pass without any obstruction over the Heinrichshohe, mountain. In the south-west, however, towards the mountain Achtermannshohe a brisk west wind carried before it thin transparent vapours. About quarter past four I looked round, to see whether the atmosphere would permit me to have a free prospect to the south-west, when I observed, at a very great distance towards the Achtermannshohe, a human figure of monstrous size ! A violent gust of wind having almost carried away my hat, I clapped my hand to it; and in moving my hand towards my head, the colossal figure did the same.

"The pleasure which I felt at this discovery can hardly be described; for I had already walked many a weary step in the hope of seeing this shadowy image, without being able to gratify my curiosity. I immediately made another movement, by bending my body, and the colossal figure before me repeated it. I was desirous of doing the same once more, but my colossus had vanished. I remained in the same position, waiting to see whether it would return; and in a few minutes it again made its appearance on the Achtermannshohe. I then called the landlord of the neighbouring inn, and having both taken the position which I had taken alone, we looked toward the Achtermannshohe, but did not perceive any thing. We had not, however, stood long, when two such colossal figures were formed over the above eminence, which repeated their compliments by bending their bodies as we did, after which they vanished. We retained our position, kept our eyes fixed on the spot, and in a little time the two figures

again stood before us, and were joined by a third." [that of a traveller who then came up and joined the party.] "Every movement made by us, these figures imitated; but with this difference that the phenomenon was sometimes weak and faint, sometimes strong and well defined."

SUNRISE ON THE PYRENEES.

We do not remember to have read a more glowing and impressive description than that which follows. By the spirit with which the writer wields his pen the reader is made to catch his enthusiasm, and breathless like himself, struggles to gain the summit and witness the unaccustomed splendours which shall there attend the appearance of the "glorious day." The striking resemblance to the universal deluge, afforded by one of the attendant circumstances on this occasion, must have irresistibly impressed him, and is most happily delineated.

"It was then the month of August; the night had been misty, which I knew was rather a reason to look for a bright morning. The smooth even path as we went along, and the deep conversation into which we entered, beguiled our route; so that I was somewhat surprised on casting my looks towards the east, as we issued from a ravine about half way up the mountain's side, to find that the dawn was beginning to break. I stopped for a moment to take breath, for the ascent had been very rapid. I gazed around me, and was pleased to see the mists rising gradually upwards, and leaving the bottom of the valleys clear. I distinguished the little river which had narrowed as we mounted towards its source, and the still smaller streamlets that trickled down towards it, like skeins of silvery tissue hanging on the heathy mantle which covered the mountain. A fresh breeze came from the eastward heralding the rising sun, and I marked appearing above the horizon those prelude beams which he sends out, as want-couriers, to clear his path along the ways of heaven. Remembering my disappointment of the preceding morning, on the top of the Pic du Midi, I was resolved to be in time at the summit of Arbizon, to see the first burst of the

day-god as he showed his splendid face to my portion of the world. I gave therefore the hint to my guides, and we pushed quickly on. My companions, though more accustomed to the scene than I was, seemed to participate in my anxiety. We all abandoned for a while the subject which had lately given such interest to our conversation; and paid, in silence, our homage to the sovereign whose levee we were hurrying to attend. The vapours kept pace with us at first; they mounted beside us for awhile, but soon outstripped our progress; as they left all clear before us, we saw them blending gradually with the clouds, which had already taken their high stations close to the mountain's summit. As the light increased a gradual tone and appearance of security seemed to accompany it on the earth. The howling of the wolves, and the barking of the shepherd's dogs, which had kept concert during the night, now gave place to the hum of insects. The eagles, sure of their way, came two or three of them floating down through the air, and seemed to pierce with keen gaze the deepest recesses of the vale. The wild flowers opened their bosoms, and freely shared their fragrant scents with the breeze, that kissed them as it passed upwards. All nature began to robe itself for the coming ceremony. The gray clouds assumed a variety of tinges of many brilliant colours. The peaks rising here and there above them shone in roseate hues; and the snow-heaps that lay on the granite beds were covered with a deep blush of blended crimson and purple. I hurried breathlessly forward, for I feared I should be late. I found that nature was too quick for me. I saw the horizon covered with the yellow streams, on whose tops the sun treads so quickly. His dazzling beams were fast piercing up the skies and the west of heaven was glowing in all the splendid mixture of bright colours which it catches from reflection. I hasten on still faster. I had taken the lead of my companions. I did not look at all before me, until enveloped by thick mists, and losing all sight

of the beautiful panorama around me, I found that we, were actually in the clouds.

“A pang of disappointment was my first sensation, but I did not pause in my career. I heard Claude and Eoinard call to me that I was mounting too high from the path, but I replied that I would soon rejoin them. They paused, and I rushed on. I hoped still to find an opening through the vapours to catch a glimpse of the world below me, blazing in all the splendour of the fully risen luminary. The mist told me that my hopes were vain, and that the moment was past, for they were all at once illuminated with a sudden rush of brightness, that gave to every particle of which they were composed a silver brilliancy, and seemed to throw a glow of warmth into the atmosphere. A few minutes more led me to the confines of this bright veil. The pointed peaks of the mountain began to appear—then the blue heaven above—and in another step or two, I had passed the outward edge of the mist. I looked round, and felt a thrill of awe shoot through me, as I gazed on the solemnity of the scene. As far as the eye could penetrate the apparently boundless extent, a thick clouds alone was visible below me, and the spotless vault of heaven above. Not the slightest sign of earth, or of man was within view. The heavy mass of congregated vapours, in their millions of involuted folds, brought at once to my mind the notion of the universal deluge, when the world of waters swept majestically along crushing and burying all trace of animal and vegetable existence. I imagined the last of living victims flying from the coming flood, and hurrying his tottering steps to the summit of the highest hill. I retreated unvoluntarily upwards—and could have fled in the midst of abstraction, had not the out-busting of the glorious sun given a new and splendid character to this most wonderful scene. He rushed up rapidly from the mass of clouds into the clear blue heaven. He flung no beams around him. Nothing existed as a ground work to throw them out into shadow, or mark their palpable touch. He was a ball of single and intolerable splendour. My gaze

was instantaneous, and had nearly blinded me. I covered my eyes for a moment, and when I looked again the whole ocean of clouds was as a multitude of wreaths of snow, enwrapped one over the other in folds of dazzling whiteness. The scene was too splendid and too sublime for my continual gaze. I turned in search of relief, and caught, to the southward the whole extended chain of mountains spreading to the right and left, and lost in the imperfect light of their far distant limits.

"Barren and desolate as they looked, there was something in them which spoke of a nature which was not strange to me. They were palpable realities that recalled me to the world, and brought home to me associations of humanity. I looked on them in all their venerable magnitude of form and extent, enthroned on earth, and covered with the glow of heaven. In all my reverence for their mightiness, I was never so impressed with it as now."

FROM M. DE GERANDO'S HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY.

"The establishment of Christianity is the most sublime and charming spectacle presented by the annals of the human race. The notion of the Deity cleared of the gross fables, that had so long disguised it, was exhibit to the world in all its grandeur and purity, uniting the attributes of infinite power, wisdom and goodness, the characters of a first creating cause, and of an overruling Providence, that watches constantly over his creatures with paternal affection. The Gospel explained to us the deep mystery of our nature and destiny, and revealed to us the transitory character of the present life, and the sublimity of our origin and future prospects. It gave to us a perfect code of morals, which sanctifies all the social ties, purifies the natural affections, consoles and supports us in adversity, rewards us for every sacrifice, and inspires the most complete and generous forgetfulness of self. The Gospel represents the Divinity under the form of a kind and Heavenly Father, and commands us to worship him in spirit and in truth. It strengthens and sanctifies the notion of

moral duty, by connecting it with religious feeling, and with the hopes and fears of future retribution. It breathes into the heart of each individual, and into the common frame of society, the new and living principle of love to God and man. Distracted with agonizing doubts, and crushed to the earth with a load of sorrows, the human race received with transport the revelation of this divine doctrine, which satisfied all their wishes, removed all uncertainties, and opened to the virtuous and the wretched the most encouraging prospects. How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those that bring good tidings! Such a system carried as it were in its effects internal evidence of its heavenly origin. There was also this distinct and peculiar blessing in the Christian dispensation, that it was not an exclusive gift, confined in its distribution to a select few, but addressed itself freely and equally to all. In its nature, it was a common privilege, as large and general as the air. It even looked with a sort of partiality upon the poor and humble, took by the hand such persons as the world had abandoned, visited the most obscure dwellings, and carressed little children with peculiar fondness. The mythological allegories of the pagans were probably intended as vehicles of sublime truth; but they were only communicated to a few, and as a profound mystery.—Their philosophers had arrived by meditation at the knowledge of many sound doctrines in theology and morals: but these were still the subjects of grave dispute among the deepest thinkers, and could not be understood by the mass of mankind. This forgotten and neglected mass, nevertheless, covers the face of the world, performs all the labor, and endures all the sufferings; and it was the precise object of Christianity to raise the character, and improve the condition of this portion of society. It debased the proud and exalted the humble; and it viewed all men, of whatever condition or country, as one great family of brothers.

“Such, in its primitive beauty, was the theory of our religion, and we see it realized in the early prac-

tice of the Church. The first Christians were few in number, and under the influence of a firm faith, which with them had overcome the prejudices of education, and all interested motives. They were penetrated with the true spirit of their religion, and rose above the terrors of persecution, danger, and death itself.—How admirable is their conduct, as described in the Acts of the Apostles, and the writings of the Fathers. They held every thing in common, had but one heart and soul, were full of zeal in doing good, and patient in suffering evil, perfect patterns of kindness, generosity, and courage, real sages without knowing it, and they outdid in their humble walks of life the sublime virtues, which we admire in the conduct of the greatest and best men.”

MISTAKEN VIEWS OF RELIGION.

One cause which impedes the reception of religion, even among the well disposed, is that garment of sadness in which people delight to suppose her dressed; and that life of hard, pining abstinence, which they pretend she enjoins on her disciple. And it were well if this were only the misrepresentation of her declared enemies: but unhappily, it is the too frequent misconception of her injudicious friends. But such an overcharged picture is not more unamiable, than it is unlike: for I venture to affirm, that Religion, with all her beautiful and becoming sanctity, imposes fewer sacrifices, not only of rational but of pleasurable enjoyments, than the uncontrolled dominion of whatever vice. Her service is not only perfect safety, but perfect freedom. She is not so tyrannising as passion, so exacting as the world, nor so despotic as fashion. Let us try the case by a parallel, and examine it, not as affecting our virtue but our pleasure. Does religion forbid the cheerful enjoyments of life, as rigorously as avarice forbids them? does she require such sacrifices of our ease as ambition; or such renunciation of our quiet, as pride? Does devotion murder sleep, like dissipation? Does she destroy health, like intemperance? Does she annihilate fortune, like gambling? Does she embitter life,

like discord ; or abridge it, like duelling ? Does religion impose more vigilance than suspicion ; or half as many mortifications as vanity ? Vice has her martyrs ; and the most austere and ascetic (who mistake the genius of christianity almost as her enemy) never tormented himself with such cruel and careless severity, as that with which envy lacerates her unhappy votaries. Worldly honor obliges us to be at the trouble of resenting injuries—but religion spares us that inconvenience, by commanding us to forgive them ; and by this injunction, consults our happiness no less than our virtue ; for the torment of constantly hateing any must be at least equal to the sin of it. If this estimate be fairly made then is the balance clearly on the side of religion, even in the article of pleasure.

CREEK INDIANS.

The eloquent figurative language of the American aborigines, has been often a subject of admiration. Their 'talks' are always characteristic, and frequently partake of the strength and dignity of the language of Nature. Sometime in the last autumn, the chief, and head men of the Creek nation of the Indians, received instructions from the United States' agent to meet commissioners for the purpose of making a new cession of land. They held a council, and in reply to this demand, issued a paper, conceived by the chiefs, head men and warriors present, and written by one of them, exhibiting their progress in agriculture and other arts of civilization, and announcing their determination *not to sell one foot more of their lands*. This paper they caused to be published in the newspapers of the United States ; and from it we copy the following eloquent extract : " The benevolent societies now in operation in our country, by whose care a number of our children are now under tuition, promise to do well ; and under their system of education, we hope to ascend the hill of science, where happiness and virtue are to be found ; and in the attainment of these blessings we are determined to remain

on the soil which gave us birth, and in our own native land, where rests the remains of our ancestors; there also shall our bones moulder with the dust of our forefathers; and there shall our children rise in prosperity and happiness, or sink in adversity. We acknowledge we are weak and reduced to a handful; and we know that our white brothers are strong and numerous as the trees of our forest; yet may we not hope to receive that justice which our importance requires?—Our father the President loves us, and is now doing much to improve the condition of us his red children. Under his fostering hand we hope we have nothing to fear. He views with delight our rapid improvement in civilization; and we now leave it to our christian brothers, the white people, if it would not be hard and painful to see us driven from our houses our fields, our country, our privileges we now enjoy, to a land where the temptation would be great to lay aside the axe, the plough, the wheel and the loom, and betake themselves again to the unfortunate employment of hunting." The following lines, taken from a valuable Eastern print (the Hartford Mirror) appear to us to allude to this subject in a manner singularly beautiful and touching.

Remonstrance of the Creek Indians against being removed from their own territory.

See ye those mounds so green and fair,
Where rest the dews, where smiles the sky?
There sleeps our fathers dust and there
Shall theirs be laid.

Dark are their brows, and wild they rove
Untutor'd o'er their native earth,
Yet deep their native bosoms love
Their land of birth.

Drive them not hence!—they only ask
The humble cabin's roof to rear,
And ply the hunter's dangerous task
With toils severe.

To sow with corn the furrow'd glade,
Dejected sigh o'er buried years,
And sooth their frowning hero's shade
With bitter tears.

Tho' 'mid these woods no deer shou'd roam,
 Nor fish within these waters glide,
 Tho' haggard famine haunt their homes,
 And quell their pride :

Though hatred arm oppressive foes,
 And war invade their sad retreat,
 Still where their EARLIEST breath arose,
 THEIR LAST SHALL FLEET.

ELEPHANT FIGHT.

A relic of ancient Indian splendor is still to be witnessed at Lucnow, in the elephant fights which are sometimes exhibited, and for the purpose of which a considerable number of these animals, of unusual fierceness, are entertained. It is well known that at particular periods the male elephant becomes fierce, unmanageable, or, in truth, mad ; or as it is termed by the natives, *must* ; at which time they readily destroy any animal they meet with, or fight with each other when opposed. They are in this state driven into an enclosure or space appointed for the purpose ; and with certain precautions, are permitted to encounter each other. The shock of two such animals cannot but form a very terrific exhibition, and must excite a very keen interest in the minds of the numerous spectators ; but those who form very high expectations would be disappointed. The animals themselves, as if conscious of their own irresistible weight and force, close cautiously ; and there are even precautions taken to prevent serious damage ; if they are very fierce, they are brought up on opposite sides of a wall, somewhat more than knee high, and the fight is confined to wrestling across the

barrier, with their tusks and trunks. If they are permitted to meet in open space, there are always men ready with fire-works of which the elephant entertains a great terror, to rush in between and separate them. The reader will be surprised to hear, that for the most part their mohouts, or keepers, sit upon their backs, and guide or urge them on. It is uncommon for any elephant, even the most wild and fierce, to harm, or cease to recognize his keeper ; and dangerous though the service be, the mohout sits upon his own beast, exposed to the shock of the conflict, and to the tusks and trunk of the adverse elephant with wonderful composure.

Sometimes the animals are let loose without any restraint, and if two pretty equally matched and powerful animals thus meet the conflict is terrible, though less so to the eye than might be expected ; for their motions are comparatively slow and measured ; they join and push with the head and clash the tusks, and intertwine and grapple with the trunk, uttering from time to time short shrill shrieks. After a while the weakest is borne down upon his haunches, or may be rolled over on his side, when the victor animal attacks him with his tusks, and would put him to death if permitted ; but the combat is then terminated. Horsemen mounted on active well managed coursers, with fire-works bound on their spear-heads, dash towards the struggling beasts, and goading the conqueror, force him to quit his fallen foe to turn on the aggressors, who fly in their turn, and draw him after them. Frequent accidents occur at these spectacles—a horse falling, or a foot slipping generally prove fatal ; the enraged elephant seizes on what he can come up with, and crushes it to pieces, after, perhaps, playing with it for a while, as a cat with a mouse. I was myself witness to an accident of this nature, though not at Lucnow ; an uncommonly wild and powerful elephant had been let loose, which, after having driven

away its antagonist, set off at full speed towards the neighboring jungle, followed by the horsemen, who succeeded in turning him. A great crowd had collected, for the place was an open market within the town; and the elephant took its way right through the midst of the market, then to the right and left, the men running, and the women scarcely waiting to snatch up their children in their sudden terror. One unhappy man stumbled and fell just in the path of the furious animal; we saw it stoop and pass over him; and so rapidly did it pass, that some doubted if the man were hurt.—But they were soon undeceived; he lay extended on the spot, and, the danger being passed, those nearest him lifted and found him quite dead. Whether the blow had been given by the elephant's foot, tusk, or trunk, was not known—a touch of either is always sufficient to cause death.

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